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SELECT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION  
Senate Concurrent Resolution 22

ALTERNATIVE  
INSTRUCTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

WILLIAM P. HOBBY, CHAIRMAN  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF TEXAS

BILL CLAYTON, VICE CHAIRMAN  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SENATOR GRANT JONES, CHAIRMAN  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ALTERNATIVE  
INSTRUCTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Submitted to the Sixty-Eighth Legislature  
November 1982

**Report and Recommendations**

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC EDUCATION  
Senate Concurrent Resolution 22**

**Alternative Instructional Arrangements**



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## The State of Texas Sixty-Seventh Legislature First Called Session

### SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 22

*Establishing the Select Committee on Public Education to study and make recommendations of methods to provide quality public education.*

WHEREAS, High quality education for the citizens of Texas is a vital public concern, and a major portion of the state's total budget is appropriated for education; and

WHEREAS, The education system will be undergoing important changes as a result of recent major policy decisions in such areas as curriculum reform, bilingual education, and requirements relating to teacher competency; and

WHEREAS, Additional decisions may need to be made, particularly concerning financial matters, following the outcome of current litigation and the proposed reduction in federal funds and considering the growth of the permanent school fund; and

WHEREAS, Local independent school districts need to reevaluate their current programs in light of the statewide assessment results, and many districts face continuing difficulty in financing capital expenditures; and

WHEREAS, The legislature indicated its continuing concern and need for additional information about education matters during the Regular Session of the 67th Legislature by authorizing interim studies of educational costs and of vocational education; and

WHEREAS, These important and widespread changes, along with continuing general property tax concerns, create a need for leadership and for a forum for cooperation and communication relating to public education in Texas; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate of the State of Texas, the House of Representatives concurring, that the 67th Legislature, 1st Called Session, hereby establish a special committee to study the issues and concerns relating to public education in Texas, including curriculum reform, bilingual education, requirements relating to teacher com-

petency, and alternative methods of financing; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the committee be composed of 18 members, including the lieutenant governor, chairman; the speaker of the house of representatives, vice-chairman; the chairman of the Senate Committee on Education; four other members of the senate, to be appointed by the lieutenant governor; the chairman of the House Committee on Public Education; four other members of the house, to be appointed by the speaker of the house; the chairman of the State Board of Education; two other members of the State Board of Education, to be appointed by the chairman of that board; the chairman of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Public Education; and two other members of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Public Education, to be appointed by the governor; the chairman shall appoint advisory committees, as necessary, and the committee shall hold meetings and public hearings at the call of the chairman; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the Central Education Agency be authorized to provide an executive director and staff support for the committee to assist with the conduct of the study; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the committee have the power to issue process to witnesses at any place in the State of Texas, to compel the attendance of such witnesses, and to compel the production of all books, records, documents, and instruments that the committee may require; if necessary to obtain compliance with subpoenas and other process, the committee shall have the power to issue writs of attachment; all process issued by the committee may be addressed to and served by any peace officer of the State of Texas or any of its political subdivisions; the chairman shall issue, in the name of the committee, such subpoenas and other process as the committee may direct; in the event that the chairman is absent, the vice-chairman or any designee of the chairman is authorized to issue subpoenas or any other process in the same manner as the chairman; witnesses attending proceedings of the committee under process shall be allowed the same mileage and per diem as are allowed

witnesses before any grand jury in the state. The testimony given at any hearing conducted pursuant to this resolution shall be given under oath subject to the penalties of perjury; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the committee be authorized to request the assistance, where needed in the discharge of its duties, of all state agencies, departments, and offices, and that it be the duty of such agencies, departments, and offices to assist the committee when requested to do so; the committee shall have the power to inspect the records, documents, and files of every agency, department, and office of the state, to the extent necessary to the discharge of its duties within the area of its jurisdiction; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the operating expenses of the committee be paid from the Contingent Expense Fund of the Senate and the Contingent Expense Fund of the House, equally, and that the committee members be reimbursed from these funds for their actual expenses incurred in carrying out the provisions of this resolution; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the committee make complete reports, including findings, recommendations, and drafts of any legislation deemed necessary, to the legislature as necessary and appropriate; copies of the reports shall be filed in the Legislative Reference Library, with the Texas Legislative Council, with the Secretary of the Senate, and with the Chief Clerk of the House.

ATTEST:

*W.P. Clements, Jr.*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
WILLIAM P. CLEMENTS, JR.

Governor of Texas

*W.P. Hobby*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
WILLIAM P. HOBBY

Lieutenant Governor of Texas

*Bill Clayton*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
BILL CLAYTON

Speaker of the House of Representatives

*Betty King*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
BETTY KING

Secretary of the Senate

*Betty Murray*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
BETTY MURRAY

Chief Clerk of the House

Date Passed: August 10, 1981



# Select Committee On Public Education

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## Chairman

The Honorable William P. Hobby  
Lieutenant Governor of Texas  
Houston, Texas

## Vice Chairman

The Honorable Bill Clayton  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Spring Lake, Texas

The Honorable W.E. (Pete) Snelson  
State Senate  
Chairman, Senate Education Committee  
Midland, Texas

The Honorable Ray Farabee  
State Senate  
Chairman, Senate Affairs Committee  
Wichita Falls, Texas

The Honorable Grant Jones  
State Senate  
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee  
Abilene, Texas

The Honorable Oscar Mauzy  
State Senate  
Chairman, Senate Jurisprudence Committee  
Dallas, Texas

The Honorable Mike Richards  
State Senate  
Vice Chairman, Senate Subcommittee  
on Elections  
Houston, Texas

The Honorable Hamp Atkinson  
House of Representatives  
Chairman, Public Education Committee  
New Boston, Texas

The Honorable Bill Blanton  
House of Representatives  
Vice Chairman, House Public Education  
Committee  
Carrollton, Texas

The Honorable Matt Garcia  
House of Representatives  
Vice Chairman, House Judiciary Committee  
San Antonio, Texas

The Honorable Bill Haley  
House of Representatives  
Chairman, House Public Education Budget and  
Oversight Committee  
Center, Texas

The Honorable Craig Washington  
House of Representatives  
Chairman, House Human Services Committee  
Houston, Texas

The Honorable Joe Kelly Butler  
Chairman, State Board of Education  
Houston, Texas

The Honorable E.R. Gregg, Jr.  
State Board of Education  
Chairman, Committee on Rules, Budget and Finance  
Jacksonville, Texas

The Honorable Jimmy L. Elrod  
State Board of Education  
Chairman, Committee on Investment of the Permanent  
School Fund  
San Antonio, Texas

Dr. Willis M. Tate  
Chairman, Governor's Education Action Group  
Dallas, Texas

Dr. Calvin E. Gross  
Governor's Education Action Group  
San Antonio, Texas

Dr. Linus D. Wright  
Governor's Education Action Group  
Dallas, Texas

## Executive Director

Mrs. Cis Myers  
Deputy Commissioner of Education  
Austin, Texas

# Select Committee on Public Education

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Bill W. Clayton, Vice Chairman  
Speaker, House of Representatives

Representative Hamp Atkinson

Representative Bill Blanton

Joe Kelly Butler  
State Board of Education

Jimmy L. Elrod  
State Board of Education

Senator Ray Farabee

Representative Matt Garcia

E.R. Gregg, Jr.  
State Board of Education

Dr. Calvin E. Gross  
Governor's Advisory Committee  
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Representative Bill Haley

Senator Grant Jones

Senator Oscar Mauzy

Senator Mike Richards

Senator Pete Snelson

Dr. Willis M. Tate  
Governor's Advisory Committee  
on Education

Representative Craig Washington

Dr. Linus D. Wright  
Governor's Advisory Committee  
on Education

Cis Myers  
Executive Director

December 20, 1982

TO THE HONORABLE GOVERNOR OF TEXAS  
AND MEMBERS OF THE 68TH LEGISLATURE:

I am pleased to submit the Report and Recommendations of the Subcommittee on Alternative Instructional Arrangements.

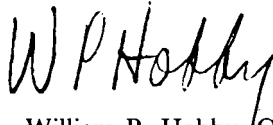
The subcommittee was part of the Select Committee on Public Education which was created by Senate Concurrent Resolution 22. Making up the subcommittee were state Senator Grant Jones, state Senator Mike Richards and state Representative Matt Garcia. The subcommittee examined alternative programs, magnet schools and the merit of the twelfth grade in high school. In lieu of recommending the elimination of the 12th grade, the subcommittee recommended that high school graduation requirements be strengthened.

The Edit and Review Subcommittee reviewed the report and recommendations on the morning of October 15, 1982, and adopted them with no changes.

The full Select Committee on Public Education adopted the report as recommended by the Edit and Review Subcommittee on October 15, also.

I believe that the recommendations in this report address areas of concern of both educators and the public and will assist in meeting the needs of Texas public school students.

Respectfully submitted



William P. Hobby, Chairman  
Select Committee on Public Education



# Subcommittee on Alternative Instructional Arrangements

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## Subcommittee Members

The Honorable Grant Jones, Chairman  
Senate

The Honorable Mike Richards  
Senate

The Honorable Matt Garcia  
House of Representatives

## Subcommittee Advisers

Miss Faye Bryant  
Associate Superintendent of Magnet Programs  
Houston Independent School District  
Houston, Texas

Dr. George Coale  
Clinical Associate Professor  
Baylor College of Medicine  
Houston, Texas

Mr. Pete Dallas, Senior Vice President  
The First National Bank of Amarillo  
Amarillo, Texas

Mr. Augusto Guerra, Superintendent  
Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District  
Pharr, Texas

Mrs. Howard Hagar  
Waco, Texas

Mr. John Joiner, AIA, Vice President  
Cavitt McKnight Weymouth, Inc.  
Houston, Texas

Dr. Billy C. Kennedy, Superintendent  
Greenville Independent School District  
Greenville, Texas

Mr. Walter Parker  
Vice President for External Affairs  
North Texas State University  
Denton, Texas

Dr. Joel Pittman, Principal  
Sunset High School  
Dallas, Texas

Mr. Thomas J. Smith  
Attorney  
San Antonio, Texas

Dr. Charles Thacker  
Assistant Superintendent-Curriculum  
Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District  
Carrollton, Texas

Dr. C. Taylor Whittier  
Professor of Education Administration  
University of Texas at San Antonio  
San Antonio, Texas

### Select Committee Staff

Cis Myers, Executive Director  
Deputy Commissioner of Education

Joe Neely, Assistant Executive Director  
Texas Education Agency

Ann Halstead, Editor  
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Barbara LaHaye, Committee Secretary  
Texas Education Agency

Gwen Newman, Administrative Assistant  
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Melody Chatelle, Research Director  
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Dr. Victoria Bergin, Associate Commissioner  
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Valerie Wright, Journalist  
Texas Education Agency

Brian Wilson, Director of Information Services  
Texas Education Agency

Susan Green, Secretary  
Texas Education Agency

Dr. Tom Krueck, Director of Special Programs  
Texas Education Agency

Olga Tenorio, ADP Equipment Operator  
Texas Education Agency



# Select Committee on Public Education

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State Board of Education

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Senator Mike Richards

Senator Pete Snelson

Dr. Willis M. Tate  
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Dr. Linus D. Wright  
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Cis Myers  
Executive Director

October 15, 1982

THE HONORABLE WILLIAM P. HOBBY, CHAIRMAN  
EDIT AND REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

THE HONORABLE JOE KELLY BUTLER, VICE CHAIRMAN  
EDIT AND REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

Dear Governor Hobby and Mr. Butler:

I am pleased to submit the Report and Recommendations of the Subcommittee on Alternative Instructional Arrangements.

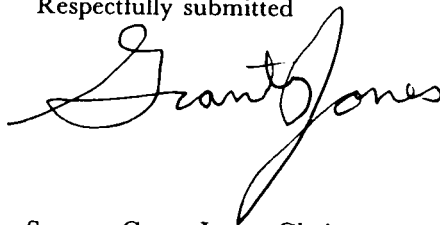
In the course of preparing this report, the subcommittee reviewed magnet schools, alternatives to out-of-school suspension programs and varying graduation requirements. The subcommittee, along with many of the 12 advisers who assisted in the preparation of this report, visited exemplary alternative instructional arrangements throughout the state. Public hearings allowed the subcommittee to receive reports about additional programs.

The subcommittee found that a variety of unique programs are being conducted in school districts around the state. A strong point of many of the programs was that they were established to meet the particular needs of a school district and its students. Findings from the public hearings and site visits played an important part in the recommendations that are being forwarded to you.

In addition to its advisers, the subcommittee received an immeasurable amount of assistance from school districts and state agency personnel. I believe the report and recommendations from the Subcommittee on Alternative Instructional Arrangements offer some insights into ways school programs can better meet the needs of students.

The subcommittee is willing to provide further information on any of its recommendations.

Respectfully submitted



Senator Grant Jones, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Alternative Instructional Arrangements



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# Historical Perspective

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The history of Texas reflects a continuing concern for the education of its citizens and their differing educational needs. In 1802, ruling Spanish officials issued a proclamation ordering judges to compel parents to send their children to school. Under Mexican rule, the Constitution of 1827 ordered the states of Coahuila and Texas to establish primary schools where the course of study was to include reading, writing, arithmetic, religion, a brief history of the Constitution and the Republic, instruction in the rights and duties of man in society, and "whatever else may conduce the better education of youth." However, there was no financial provision for the schools.

Texas, in its Declaration of Independence from Mexico in 1836, charged Mexico with, among other things, neglecting education. The new Texas Congress was ordered to provide a general system of education. Mirabeau B. Lamar, the second president of the Republic of Texas, spoke of the need to dedicate public land for schools in his first presidential address on December 20, 1838. The government appropriated three leagues of land (13,284 acres) for the establishment of a primary school or academy in each county in 1839. Texas constitutions for 1845, 1866 and 1869 each had articles devoted to education.

Legislation also promoted education of children through compulsory attendance laws, the first of which was adopted in 1915. Under the early laws, every child who was at least eight years old but not more than 14 years old was required to attend school for a period of not less than 100 days annually. An Act passed in 1935 set the mandatory school age at seven to 16 years of age and the academic year at 120 days.

Early schools were characterized by a very structured curriculum focusing on the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. Group instruction was the rule with little consideration given to the concept of individualized instruction.

No stigma was attached to leaving school at an early age. Many jobs were available which required little technical knowledge or skills, and as a result, low achievers, particularly the economically deprived, often chose to drop out of school long before graduation. Alternative programs to meet the needs of such students were almost non-existent.

During the 1960s the perceived role of the public schools changed dramatically. Critics charged that the schools were dehumanizing institutions that were indifferent to individual student needs. Intense integration efforts during this period of social revolution focused on the nation's schools.

While the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Topeka (Kan.) Board of Education* struck down separate but equal schools, most districts in Texas maintained racially segregated schools well into the 1960s.

It was not until the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964 that a major effort was made to integrate the public schools in Texas. Efforts employed to promote integration included:

- (1) court-ordered transfers;
- (2) voluntary transfers in which majority race students attended schools in which they would be a minority; and
- (3) pairing schools so that students in certain grades at school A would attend school B while students in those grades at school B attended school A.

In 1965, Congress approved the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the goal of which was to strengthen and improve quality and educational opportunities in the nation's elementary and secondary schools. Financial assistance provided by the Act allowed schools to establish special programs, most of which were directed toward children of low-income families. Schools utilized the new federal funds to expand school library resources, provide supplementary educational centers and services, and for educational research and planning.

During the fiscal year beginning September 1, 1964, and ending August 31, 1965, the amount of federal funds allocated for public schools in Texas was \$14,518,808. Following enactment of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the allotment for September 1, 1967, to August 31, 1968, increased to \$121,821,713. This change represents an increase of more than 700 percent.

New and innovative programs were developed utilizing alternative instructional strategies. Such strategies included open classrooms which stressed informal education, individual study and cross-aged grouping of students; classrooms without walls, often in non-school facilities using people and resources to fashion an education experience of the student's own choosing; team teaching; and computer-assisted instruction.

# Educational Concerns

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However, despite the massive amounts of federal aid and the vigorous efforts of educators to address individual student needs, concerns regarding the quality of the public schools still exist and must be addressed. One such problem which remains is the school dropout.

Since 1973-74, annual enrollment in Texas public schools has totaled more than 2.9 million students, according to data from the Superintendents Annual Report. Every year through 1979-80, superintendents were required to indicate the number of students who dropped out of school by age and ethnicity. The data indicated that more than 60,000 students dropped out of school each year, beginning in 1973-74. While this number indicates that schools are maintaining a high percentage of their students until graduation, the fact remains that there are a large number of students who are dropping out. It is difficult to determine why students leave school before completing high school graduation requirements, but part of the reason may be related to the failure of high school programs to address the individual needs of students.

Another trend that has concerned educators is declining achievement of public school students as evidenced by a continuous drop in scores on tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) since 1963.

Lower scores on the tests have been interpreted by some authorities as a sign that students are not doing as well on the whole as students of nearly 20 years ago, and neither are their schools. The scores are considered one indicator of how schools perform.\*

The SAT, primarily taken by high school seniors who intend to enroll in colleges, has been used since the 1920s to help determine high school students' apparent preparedness for college. The mathematics portion of the SAT requires a background in mathematics taught in grades one through nine. The verbal portion assesses reading skills and understanding in word relationships. The minimum score possible on the tests is 200; the maximum, 800.

A decline in average scores among Texas students in recent years is reflective of nationwide trends.

## Average Scores

Year	VERBAL		MATHEMATICAL	
	National	Texas	National	Texas
1972-73	445	438	481	474
1973-74	444	439	480	475
1974-75	434	431	472	467
1975-76	431	427	472	466
1976-77	429	424	470	464
1977-78	429	425	468	460
1978-79	427	418	467	456
1979-80	424	416	466	455
1980-81	424	415	466	455
1981-82	426	415	467	453

A slight improvement in the national average was indicated in recently released results of the 1982 test. Texas students did not follow the national trend. However, average scores for Texas students may be reflective of the large number of students who take the test. The College Board, administrator for the SAT, notes that "in general, the greater the number of students taking the test, the lower the score in that test." About 32

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\*Houston Chronicle, September 22, 1982.

percent of Texas students in the class of 1980, the most recent year for which percentage of students taking the SAT was available, took the SAT.

In the same year that 32 percent of Texas students took the SAT test, only 2 percent of students in South Dakota took the SAT, and they had the highest verbal score—522—in the Midwest. The highest math score in the Midwest was in Iowa where only 3 percent of the students took the test. South Carolina had the lowest average in the nation—378 in verbal, 412 in math—with 48 percent of all seniors taking the test.

The lower scores may also be related to the fact that many high school students today are shunning science and higher mathematics courses in favor of less demanding courses. This trend is of particular concern because of the necessity of producing workers who can relate to modern technologically oriented industry.

The state requires that students graduating from a Texas public school have a minimum of 18 credit units. Among those 18 units there must be three units of English, one unit of World History or World Geography, one unit of American history,  $\frac{1}{2}$  unit of American government, two units of mathematics, two units of science,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  units of physical education and  $\frac{1}{2}$  unit of health. In addition, students must take  $6\frac{1}{2}$  units of electives from a list of subjects approved by the Central Education Agency.

The 67th Texas Legislature passed House Bill 246 requiring state revision of the public school curriculum. Section 21.101 (a) of the bill requires that "Each school district that offers kindergarten through Grade 12 shall offer a well-balanced curriculum that includes: (1) English language arts, (2) other languages, to the extent possible, (3) mathematics, (4) science, (5) health, (6) physical education, (7) fine arts, (8) social studies, (9) economics, with emphasis on the free enterprise system and its benefits, (10) business education, (11) vocational education, and (12) Texas and United States history as individual subjects and in reading courses."

An important aspect of the legislation is a section that directs the State Board of Education to designate the essential elements of each of the subjects required in the revised curriculum. In order to be accredited, a school district must provide instruction in the essential elements specified by the Board.

Several questions have been raised during the curriculum revision process. They include:

- (1) Does the state need to require more than 18 credits for graduation from high school? Some districts already require a minimum of 20 credits. A few districts require as many as 24 credits.

It should be emphasized that the state requirements are intended to be minimum standards. However, the establishment of graduation requirements beyond the minimum guidelines is entirely the prerogative of the local board of trustees. While many schools require only the state minimum, others significantly exceed the requirements for their students.

- (2) Within the directive, how is it insured that the content of one course taught in a Texas school district is the same as that taught in the same course in another Texas school district? In defining the essential elements of a course, the State Board of Education will insure that any school district that offers a course is meeting certain content levels.
- (3) In determining graduation requirements, what should be the ratio between required courses, substitutions and elective courses? For example, will two years of remedial mathematics count the same as one year of calculus and one year of geometry? At the same time that public schools are talking about standards, colleges are also looking at entrance course requirements. The University of Texas, for example, has raised its entrance requirements to three years of mathematics above the level of algebra I.

# Promoting Excellence

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An example of districts demanding excellence is the International Baccalaureate Program, first implemented in Texas in the Harlingen and Houston ISDs, and now being adopted by other districts in the state.

The program is designed for academically talented and highly motivated students in their last two years of high school. Students take advanced-level courses in a curriculum designed by an international group of educators. Course subjects are arranged in six areas and students are required to choose one subject from each area. The six areas and the subjects in which the International Baccalaureate Program provides syllabuses and examinations are as follows:

1. Language A (first language, generally that native to the student or the country in which the school is located; in North America this is almost always English), including a study of world literature in translation from at least two language areas.
2. Language B (second modern language, \* distinguished from Language A in not requiring the same depth and breadth of understanding of cultural and historical contexts of language), or a second language at the level of Language A.
3. Study of Man—one of the following options:
  - a. history
  - b. geography
  - c. economics
  - d. philosophy
  - e. psychology
  - f. social anthropology
  - g. business studies
4. Experimental Sciences—one of the following options:
  - a. biology
  - b. chemistry
  - c. physics
  - d. physical science
  - e. scientific studies
5. Mathematics
6. One of the following:
  - a. plastic arts
  - b. music
  - c. a classical language\*
  - d. a second language B
  - e. an additional option under 3, 4 or 5
  - f. special syllabuses developed by IB schools
  - g. computer studies

The student seeking an International Baccalaureate Diploma is required to take a seventh course called the Theory of Knowledge, which requires 50 to 100 teaching hours spread over two years. Additionally, students

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\* Latin may be offered as a language B with the special permission of IBO Geneva.

do independent work in one subject, accompanied by an extended essay or research report, and spend at least one afternoon a week in some creative or aesthetic experience or social service activity.

Upon completion of course work, students take a series of examinations which are prepared and graded by the International Baccalaureate Office in Geneva, Switzerland. Grades are awarded on a scale of 1 to 7, ranging from (1) poor through (4) satisfactory to (7) excellent and (7E) with distinction.

Students taking International Baccalaureate examinations at Harlingen High School are scoring in the 3 to 7 range. The average score for Bellaire High School students is 4.6, compared to the national average of 4.2. Another indication of the program's quality is that Bellaire High School has 30 National Merit Semi-Finalists in its 1982-83 senior class of 570 students. Semi-finalists are selected on the basis of their performance on verbal and mathematical tests, and are eligible to compete for scholarships.

Successful performance on the examinations leads to the International Baccalaureate Diploma which, accompanied by qualifying grades, is recognized as meeting admission requirements of colleges and universities throughout the world. A number of institutions of higher education in the United States grant diploma recipients second-year standing with either course credit or advanced placement without credit. Schools in Texas that recognized the International Baccalaureate Diploma in 1981 were:

(A—Admission; P—Advanced Placement Only; C—Course Credit and Advanced Placement)

University of Houston: A, C

St. Mary's University of San Antonio: C

University of St. Thomas: C

Southwestern University: C

University of Texas at Austin: C

Texas Christian University: C

Trinity University: P

Texas public schools offering the International Baccalaureate Program may award their own credits and diplomas. Students participating in the program at Harlingen High School in Harlingen and Bellaire High School in Houston usually have 24 credits at the end of their high school careers.

Implementing such innovative programs has required many changes on the part of Texas schools. With the ESEA funds serving as "seed money," a variety of programs have been piloted throughout Texas and the nation during the past two decades. The programs have experienced mixed patterns of success.



# Magnet Programs

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One of the most promising programs developed is the magnet school. Using the magnet school concept, districts have demonstrated that, under certain conditions, money, resources and highly specialized teachers can be concentrated to meet the needs of a selected student population.

Magnet schools were first established as a result of court orders as a means of attracting white students into predominantly black attendance zones and *vice versa*. The overall goal of the programs is to provide quality education for all students. While a comprehensive school provides a broad educational program to a heterogeneous student body, the magnet program serves the specific needs or interests of a selected student body.

In focusing on its single area of study, however, it should be emphasized that the student body in a magnet program exhibits all levels of ability. Not all of the students are gifted or talented, nor do all of them have the same goals. The curriculum in a well-developed magnet program provides students with course work to prepare for careers at the support, skilled and professional level.

Magnet programs may exist in one of several forms:

- (1) Add-on programs—Extra instructional programs are provided in addition to the regular curriculum. The program may be for the school's entire student body.
- (2) School Within a School—A program is designed for a specific group of students within a school. The students participating in the program meet with other students for non-academic courses and academic courses not related to the magnet school's areas of specialization.
- (3) Separate and Unique Schools—The program is changed completely to meet the student's needs.
- (4) Cluster Center Programs—The programs specialize in a given area of educational experiences. A variety of teaching skills are used to teach a subject. Students usually are brought to the program from other schools.
- (5) Groupings Within a Class—The teacher individualizes instruction according to the needs of the students. The class, for example, may be divided into several reading groups with students assigned to the one appropriate for their reading ability.

One of the major pluses for the magnet school or program is that students attend because they and their parents choose it. If a student must ride a bus to the school, it is by choice, not by order.

The success of magnet programs appears to be greatly influenced by community support and acceptance. Such support often can be achieved by seeking broad involvement as the school is developed, including public input on the types of programs that should be offered in the schools. Involvement also must extend to the business community. Businessmen often are sources for identifying the types of skills that will be needed by businesses in the future. They know the kind of training future employees will need and the type of equipment likely to be used. Such training programs often become the focus for magnet programs, providing career training for work-oriented and college-bound students.

The limited amount of systematic research to date makes it difficult to assess the success of the existing programs, but studies and evaluations indicate that magnet schools typically lead to greater achievement by students. At least some magnet campuses send a substantially higher percentage of their graduates to college than do traditional schools in the same districts.

A report by Heather Sidor Doob, 1977, "Evaluations of Alternative Schools," analyzed data from 25 different schools representing a variety of options and found that "in most cases, the academic achievement of students

improved or remained stable....” A second study published in *Viewpoints in Teaching and Learning* in July of the same year found most students to be learning at a rate consistent with or higher than the district mean. The findings were characterized by high grade point averages, increased Scholastic Aptitude Test scores and student gains in reading and mathematics.

Some magnet programs offer students the option of attending all day or part of the day. Students who choose the all-day program may have to make other sacrifices since their magnet school may not have a full athletic program or similar extra-curricular activities. The magnet programs, however, may offer related club activities, such as a science club at a mathematics and science magnet school.

Ideally, magnet schools offer a strong basic academic program in addition to a special enrichment program. The enrichment program often is provided in a three-hour block of time each day. The magnet program curriculum is usually very structured, offering little opportunity for student choice. The school day is sometimes extended to seven hours instead of the usual six hours in order to fulfill the curriculum requirements.

In the enriched magnet program, students are provided opportunities to learn about and use extra equipment and materials not found in a conventional school. For example, a magnet program stressing mathematics and science may have a highly sophisticated laboratory and computers for student use. Teachers in magnet programs are more likely to use community resources, prepare their own materials for individual instruction, use learning contracts or adapt materials from several sources instead of relying on one textbook.

Magnet programs also are being credited with reducing school disciplinary problems. It appears that a combination of factors contribute to the decline. Among these factors are the positive motivational level of students who have chosen to attend the school and the lower pupil-teacher ratio existing in most magnet schools. Michael Berger’s study, *Violence in the Schools: Causes and Remedies*, found “an almost total lack of violence in alternative schools,” and noted that part of that achievement was thought to be related to the small population in the school.

Since most magnet schools require students to choose the program, the problems of tracking students or denying equal access are avoided. Some magnet programs, however, may require a representative mix of females, males, minority and majority youths. Other programs may have preadmission grade requirements, or, as in the case of visual and performing arts schools, may require students to audition.

## **Funding**

Cost considerations for districts in the establishment of magnet schools include:

- (1) Some magnet programs require special facilities or buildings. The specialized programs also may require the purchase of additional equipment.
- (2) Transportation costs may be increased if a school district transports students to the various programs.
- (3) Staff costs may be increased because of the necessity of hiring employees with special skills or talents and because of lower teacher-pupil ratios.
- (4) Programs offered during hours other than the regular school hours may result in additional operating expenses.

Additional funding for alternative programs can be provided through a variety of funds. Businesses, especially those that are able to hire students who have received specialized training in magnet programs, often are a supplementary source of funding for magnet programs. Costs can also be offset by the sharing of resources by several schools or school districts. The state’s two largest magnet programs operate in the Dallas Independent School District and Houston Independent School District. These districts finance their magnet programs primarily with local funds. However, Minimum Foundation funds from the state may be used in magnet programs.

## **Houston Magnet Programs**

The Houston Independent School District has a student population of 206,205 students of which 45 percent are black, 30 percent are Hispanic and 25 percent are white. The district is under a court-ordered desegregation plan but there is not court-ordered busing.

The Houston ISD magnet program began in 1975 and was instituted to replace a court-ordered integration plan which paired 22 schools. The 22 schools were paired in September 1971, and the combined enrollment was 16,733. By 1974-75, the enrollment had dropped to 15,419. Houston ISD established a Task Force on Quality Integrated Education in December 1974 and assigned it the responsibility of developing a program that would:

- (1) stall or stop the flight of residents from urban schools by offering quality education;
- (2) promote integration;
- (3) offer more educational opportunities for students; and
- (4) recommend an alternative to busing and other plans such as pairing schools.

The task force, made up entirely of community people, visited other school districts operating successful desegregation plans, and in February 1975 recommended that the Houston ISD establish a network of alternative programs. An administrative support team was established to put the task force's recommendations into action. The support team's work yielded program designs and budgets for 40 magnet programs. Houston ISD Board of Trustees selected 34 programs to be implemented in the 1975-76 school year, pending Federal Court approval of the plan.

The court granted approval July 12, 1975, and set the following objectives of the magnet school plan:

- (1) Reduce the number of schools which are 90 percent or more white or combined black and Mexican American.
- (2) Reduce the number of students attending schools which are 90 percent or more white or combined black and Mexican American.
- (3) Provide free transportation upon request to all students attending magnet schools outside their regular school attendance zone.
- (4) Report student enrollment and teacher assignment by ethnic group in each magnet school biannually.

The magnet school programs are regularly reviewed and evaluated by Houston ISD personnel to insure that program objectives are being met. In addition, a Magnet School Plan Evaluation reviewed the programs to access performance related to the Houston ISD petition and 1975 court order.

Enrollment trends at three specialty schools where enrollment was voluntary was an indication that quality education programs could promote integration:

## HOUSTON TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

Year	Black	%	Hispanic	%	White	%	TOTAL
70-71	559	39.5	596	42.1	261	18.4	1,416
71-72	308	29.8	520	50.3	206	19.9	1,034
72-73	378	28.3	613	45.9	345	25.8	1,336
73-74	361	27.2	597	44.9	371	27.9	1,329

## HIGH SCHOOL FOR PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS

Year	Black	%	Hispanic	%	White	%	TOTAL
71-72	59	25.1	21	8.9	155	66.0	235
72-73	100	24.8	28	6.9	276	68.3	404
73-74	192	32.0	97	16.1	312	51.9	601

## RIVER OAKS VANGUARD

Year	Black	%	Hispanic	%	White	%	TOTAL
72-73	105	34.1	40	13.0	163	52.9	308
73-74	99	34.7	38	13.3	148	52.0	285

Source: Houston Independent School District

Magnet programs operating in the 1981 school year for elementary students in Houston ISD were:

- (1) Bilingual/Multicultural—giving students instruction in a second language, basic survival skills in the language, and an exposure to living in a multi-cultural society.
- (2) Ecology and Outdoor Education—channeling interests in nature into learning activities and improving basic skills while studying nature, animals and plants.
- (3) Extended Instructional Day—the school day generally is from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and is designed for children of working parents. It offers a strong academic component and after-school enrichment in the arts, music, gymnastics and peer tutoring.
- (4) Fine Arts and Music—instruction is offered in art, dance, band, piano, gymnastics, drama, speech, and general and instrumental music.
- (5) Fundamental Program—stresses mastery of reading, language arts and mathematics with teaching in a self-contained classroom where instruction is organized, structured and disciplined.

- (6) Mathematics and Science—gives students the opportunity to do experiments and study in classrooms which have been converted into science laboratories. In mathematics, lab students work with modern computers.
- (7) Montessori—The Montessori method of teaching is a student-centered approach which places the responsibility for learning upon the student, who actually learns from his or her environment, not from the teacher. Teachers are Montessori-certified and serve as the link between the class environment and the student. Montessori classes are ungraded and allow students to proceed at their own pace.
- (8) Physical Development—stresses motor skills and muscle control in gymnastics, dance, team and individual sports.
- (9) Vanguard—a program for gifted and talented students that gives students responsibility for their own learning through self-pacing. It enhances basic skills and provides opportunity for participating in activities that stimulate intellectual ability, creative thinking and leadership potential.

At the high school level, magnet programs include:

- (1) aerodynamics
- (2) contemporary learning centers for students unable to cope with the regular school environment
- (3) career schools
- (4) college preparatory
- (5) communications
- (6) engineering professions
- (7) foreign languages
- (8) fundamental skills
- (9) health professions
- (10) law enforcement and criminal justice
- (11) performing and visual arts
- (12) petrochemicals
- (13) gifted and talented
- (14) vocational skills
- (15) international baccalaureate

Enrollment at some of the schools during the 1981-82 school year indicates that the goal of integration is being achieved:

**1981-82**

<b>School</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>
Pleasantville	85	46.7	46	25.3	51	28.0	182
River Oaks Vanguard	66	24.7	52	19.5	149	55.8	267
Lanier Vanguard	278	43.1	107	16.6	260	40.3	645
Contemporary Learning Center- middle school	60	47.2	24	18.9	43	33.9	127
Contemporary Learning Center- high school	151	42.5	52	14.7	152	42.8	355
Health Professions	425	56.0	157	20.7	177	23.3	759
Jordan*	721	70.8	241	23.7	57	5.5	1,019
HSPVA**	158	26.6	57	9.6	380	63.8	595
Law Enforcement Criminal Justice	135	37.6	140	39.0	84	23.4	359
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,079</b>	<b>48.0%</b>	<b>876</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>1,353</b>	<b>32.0%</b>	<b>4,308</b>
<hr/>							
<b>ETHNIC MAKEUP OF DISTRICT</b>	<b>BLACK—45%</b>		<b>HISPANIC—30%</b>		<b>WHITE—25%</b>		

To further promote integration in Houston schools, the federal court ordered a Voluntary Interdistrict Education Plan (VIEP) in 1980. The program is administered by the Texas Education Agency and permits suburban school students to attend Houston ISD magnet schools tuition free. In the 1980-81 school year, 144 students participated in VIEP. As of May 15, 1982, Houston ISD had enrolled 756 VIEP students in magnet programs. They represented transfers from 37 districts, with about 49 percent white students, 10 percent Mexican-American, and 41 percent black.

## Dallas Magnet Programs

The Dallas Independent School District had an enrollment of 126,791 students in 1981-82 of which 50.08 percent were black, 20.76 percent were Hispanic and 29.16 percent were white. Its more than 20-year school desegregation history has included busing and one court order to operate three sets of schools, one for blacks, one for whites and one of voluntary integrated schools.

In April 1976, as part of a desegregation plan, a federal court ordered Dallas ISD to establish vanguard schools for students in grades four through six, academics for grades seven and eight, and four magnet high schools. The programs in the schools were aimed at attracting students from throughout the district. The desegregation plan was based on a concept recommended by the Educational Task Force of the Dallas Alliance.

Vanguard schools give students an option to choose among a variety of teaching approaches and programs. Like students in magnet programs, those enrolled in vanguard schools have mutual interests. Programs offered in the Dallas ISD vanguard schools include:

- (1) programs for academically talented students;

\*Formerly Houston Tech

\*\*High School for Performing and Visual Arts

Source: Houston Independent School District

- (2) fundamental or “back to basics” curriculum;
- (3) individually guided education program that offers multi-age grouping, non-graded classes and team teaching;
- (4) expressive arts program which stresses self-expression through such activities as music, art and writing while acquiring the basics of mathematics, language arts, reading, science and social studies; and
- (5) Montessori programs in which the student learns from his environment, not necessarily from the teacher.

Academics also are organized around a single theme or instructional approach. Those operating in Dallas ISD include:

- (1) classical languages and literature—provides an opportunity to study languages not offered in other middle schools and gives exposure to classical ideas which have helped influence modern thought;
- (2) career exploration in which students can spend two class periods learning about a variety of careers;
- (3) environmental science in which students learn about and explore the environment, learn how to control it and how to improve it;
- (4) fundamental or ‘back to basics’ curriculum;
- (5) programs for academically talented and gifted; and
- (6) expressive art.

The magnet schools were modeled after the Skyline Career Development Center which opened in 1971. The Skyline Center, which was not a part of the desegregation order, was open to all Dallas high school students and offered them an opportunity to spend one-half of each school day studying one of more than 26 career fields.

Students attending magnet schools may enroll for a half day or for the full day. Those participating in the half-day program return to their home school for regular academic courses. Dallas ISD continues to depend on professionals in the community to aid the success of the magnet schools. Volunteers serve on advisory boards, help develop the curriculum, monitor programs to be sure the equipment and approaches are kept current with practice in the field, serve as resource persons in the classroom, and provide field trips and sites for internships and on-the-job training.

Magnet programs offered to students in grades 9 through 12 include:

- (1) arts—training in visual art, music, theater and dance;
- (2) business management—cluster programs in experience-based career education, marketing and management, and office careers;
- (3) health professions—offers introductory and advanced level course work for students planning medical or dental careers;
- (4) human services—teaches how children and adults relate to each other and deal with their problems.
- (5) public services: government and law—stresses career options in law and public services;

- (6) humanities and communication—provides a basic liberal arts education;
- (7) transportation institute—prepares students to enter many phases of the auto industry;
- (8) Skyline Center—offers a balance between academic and occupational education with a variety of career clusters;
- (9) talented and gifted magnet—offers a continuation of talented and gifted programs for students in grades 9 and 10;
- (10) engineering/science and technology—offers pre-engineering and micro-computer studies to students in grades 9 and 10;
- (11) multiple careers—provides career training for special education students; and
- (12) Metropolitan Alternative School—for students (drop-outs, potential dropouts, students with financial and family problems, and those assigned by the school district) who are unable to adjust to the structure of the regular school setting.

Dallas ISD reports in its *Interpretive Analysis of the Evaluation of Special Schools, 1980-81*, by Allen W. Scott, that as desegregation tools, the academies, vanguards and magnets have shown mixed results, with academies being the most successful.

The 1980-81 Dallas ISD vanguard enrollment was 1,992, a 25 percent increase over the 1976-77 enrollment of 1,592. In 1976-77, whites represented 15 percent of the vanguard enrollment, blacks 65 percent, and Hispanics 19 percent. The Spring 1982 enrollment by ethnic groups in vanguards, academies and magnet programs is as follows:

**DALLAS ISD  
Ethnic Enrollment\*  
Spring 1982**

**Grades 4-6**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Percentage in Vanguard Schools</b>	<b>Percentage of Total 4-6 Dallas ISD Enrollment</b>
White and Other	17.9%	28.22%
Black	61.6%	50.29%
Hispanic	20.5%	21.49%

\*Dallas Enrollment Report by Grade  
Source: Dallas Independent School District



### **Grades 7-8**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Percentage in Academies</b>	<b>Percentage of Total 7-8 Dallas ISD Enrollment</b>
White and Other	31.2%	29.04%
Black	37.3%	51.66%
Hispanic	31.5%	19.30%

### **Grades 9-12**

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>Percentage in Magnet Schools</b>	<b>Percentage of Total 9-12 Dallas ISD Enrollment</b>
White and Other	19.0%	33.34%
Black	66.4%	52.76%
Hispanic	14.6%	13.90%

## **Magnet School Concept in Other Districts**

While smaller school districts in Texas may not be able to operate magnet programs as extensive as those in Dallas or Houston, there are features in the programs that can and are being adapted in individual districts.

School districts which cannot afford to hire specialized staff may consider sharing resources. If the school district can afford to hire only a limited number of specialized staff, placing that staff in a strategic location and transporting the students to them assists in better utilization of the talents of existing staff.

Since some magnet programs do not require students to enroll full- time, one program can accommodate more students by operating in shifts. Such programs may be conducted in classrooms on a regular school campus with students coming in for a few hours a day or for one day a week, enabling fewer personnel to meet the needs of more students.

Sharing resources seems to be a common way of providing alternative instructional arrangements to students in all school districts. Regional Education Service Centers should be utilized in Texas to provide for the coordination and sharing of resources in establishing magnet concept programs. Section 11.32 of the Texas Education Code authorizes Regional Education Service Centers to provide participating school districts with various educational services and to coordinate educational planning in the region. There are 20 Regional Education Service Centers in Texas. The regions and their headquarters are:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Headquarters</b>
1	Edinburg
2	Corpus Christi
3	Victoria
4	Houston
5	Beaumont
6	Huntsville
7	Kilgore
8	Mount Pleasant
9	Wichita Falls
10	Richardson
11	Fort Worth
12	Waco
13	Austin
14	Abilene
15	San Angelo
16	Amarillo
17	Lubbock
18	Midland
19	El Paso
20	San Antonio

Another option that could be considered is an interdistrict plan such as the Voluntary Interdistrict Educational Plan operated in the Houston area. If one school district operated a magnet program, students from surrounding districts could be allowed to enroll in the program without paying tuition.

Cooperative ventures to establish regional magnet high schools are being considered by administrators and educators in the San Antonio area and in the Rio Grande Valley area. Area school district superintendents in San Antonio and staff from Region 20 Educational Service Center have discussed the feasibility of establishing a centralized, citywide high school in high technology. It probably would have a college preparatory and a vocational focus. Its goal would be to meet the need for a local labor force which would be qualified and prepared to enter a career in the technical professions. Establishment of the program is considered to be timely in the wake of the recent opening of the School of Engineering at the University of Texas at San Antonio and the local shortage of high school students who are prepared to enter college-level engineering programs. A September 1983 opening date has been proposed for the high technology high school. Some concerns that will have to be resolved are the type of facility, site, funding and curriculum. A steering committee has been established to study these issues.

The regional magnet high school being discussed for the Rio Grande Valley area would be a high school of technology. A member of the State Board of Education, administrators from 17 school districts in Hidalgo, Cameron and Willacy counties, and staff from the Region I Education Service Center are participating in the planning process. The school is being planned for students in grades 9 through 12 and would offer programs in health occupations, international business and marketing skills, and industrial technology. The programs would be geared toward college-bound and work-oriented students. A steering committee has been organized to study the feasibility of such a project and to suggest possible locations. Neither the student capacity for the school nor its opening date has been determined.

Alternative programs based on concepts which appear to be adaptable for a variety of school districts include:

- (1) contemporary learning centers which provide highly individualized instruction for students with unique learning problems;

- (2) executive internships or mentorships in which a student leaves the high school campus to work one-on-one with an adult;
- (3) volunteer programs in which students work in various agencies learning to respond to community and human needs;
- (4) peer tutoring using 11th and 12th grade students to work with elementary-level students;
- (5) relating all teaching to career opportunities;
- (6) universities—making the university a partner in education with on-campus classes and seminars;
- (7) academic center in one high school which offers demanding instructional programs or options for students from throughout the district leading to a merit transcript or other special acknowledgements; and
- (8) school-business partnerships in which business people are involved in the schools, preferably on a repeated and continuing basis, serving as speakers, leaders for field trips, technical advisers, etc.

Houston ISD initiated its school-business partnership in 1980 as a way to get business and industry actively involved in the district's schools. The three-fold purpose for the program was to give students a learning opportunity, provide schools with extra personnel and expertise, and enable firms to become more aware of education's needs and problems. The program began with 17 partnerships. In the 1981-82 school year, 22 firms sent employees to the schools each week, with most of the employees serving as teacher partners in areas like drafting, chemistry and bilingual education. The program also has resulted in businesses giving donations and equipment for many of the more specialized senior high school courses. An example of some of the school-business partnerships in Houston ISD follows:

<b>Business</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Weekly Activities</b>
Bechtel and GCAME	Marshall J.H.S.	8 engineers provide 4 weekly teacher-partners
Channel 11	Yates Communication	3 experts: speakers, field trips, technical advice, 1 teacher-partner
C. Mark Hill Association	Wharton Elementary	1 teacher-partner
First City National Bank	Jordan S.H.S.	3-6 teacher-partners, Bus.-Ed.
FLUOR	HSEP (Engineering)	2-6 elect. engineers teach courses/field trips
Goodyear	Holland M.S.	2 teacher-partners, math
Goodyear	Sterling	2 teacher-partners, math
Guardian Bank	Katherine Smith	1 tutor
Houston Lighting & Power	M.C. Williams	8 tutors basic skills
Houston Lighting & Power	Worthing H.S.	1 computer specialist
Houston Lighting & Power	HSPVA	1 computer specialist

# Alternative Programs for Disruptive Students

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Alternative programs also have been developed to deal with students identified as having behavioral problems. One commonly recognized problem is the emotionally disturbed special education student. Section 16.104 of the Texas Education Code provides guidance for districts in determining proper procedures for placement of such students in a "least restrictive environment."

Other students who exhibit behavioral problems must be dealt with in a different manner. Behavior problems may range from excessive tardiness to physical abuse of peers or teachers. Most school administrators agree that the best alternative is to identify the cause of the problem and retain the student in the classroom environment. When the behavior is such that the option of remaining in class is not feasible, other solutions must be sought. Suspension from school often results in more problems, including the opportunity for involvement in daytime criminal activities and falling behind in school work. The relationship between poor academic achievement and disruptive or delinquent behavior is well documented.

An alternative to suspension from school now growing in popularity among districts of all sizes is the establishment of in-school suspension programs. Such programs may be operated as a class within a school or in separate facilities. A student may be assigned to such programs for a few days or for an entire semester. The programs provide students with individual counseling to determine the cause of the behavioral problem and to help the student with school work. A benefit derived from the suspension programs is most often a reduction in disciplinary problems. The 1976 investigations by the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency heard many witnesses endorse alternative public schools as a solution to violence and vandalism. The subcommittee's final report endorsed the strategy.

Texas legislators enacted a law establishing a pilot program for school-community guidance centers in 1977 (Texas Education Code 16.401) to assist children with "problems which interfere with their education." The centers were designed to coordinate the efforts of school district personnel, local police departments, truant officers and probation officers in working with students, dropouts and parents to identify and solve the student's particular problems. The initial state appropriation was \$500,000 for the pilot programs distributed on a competitive basis.

A summary report of six pilot school-community guidance centers showed that the centers served as an alternative to suspension for 2,043 students during the 1979-80 school year. Of those students, 1,975 returned to the regular school program, with 1,890 of the students exhibiting improved performance and behavior. Forty-five dropouts were admitted to the centers, and of these 43 transferred to regular school programs. Of the 2,043 participants, only 21 (one percent) dropped out of school while attending a school-community guidance center.

The Governor's Advisory Committee on Education completed a comprehensive study of Texas public schools in 1980. The Committee studied strategies for addressing the needs of disruptive and potentially disruptive students. The results achieved by the school-community guidance center pilot projects were reviewed and subsequently endorsed by the Committee. As a result of the endorsement, and support of the Governor, House Bill 354 (Section 16.401 et seq. TEC) was passed during the 67th Legislature to establish new centers.

Under the provisions of the Education Code, each school district with an average daily attendance of at least 6,000 students may establish a center. School districts with an average daily attendance of less than 6,000 students may form a cooperative with other districts for the purpose of establishing a common center. This coop arrangement must be approved by the Commissioner of Education.

Currently, 11 centers are funded. The cost of operating an approved school-community guidance center is borne by the state and each participating district on the same percentage basis that applies to financing the Foundation School Program within the district. The state's share of the cost is paid from funds appropriated

for that purpose. While in attendance at a school-community guidance center, a student may not be counted in the average daily attendance of the school district for other Foundation School Program purposes.

Each of the centers received \$50,000 to pay the salaries for two teachers, one attendance consultant who works to discover the root of the disciplinary problem and arrive at a permanent solution, and one aide. School districts may hire additional staff for the centers, but the additional employees are not state funded.

Parental involvement at the individual centers varies. Most require parents to participate in an initial conference before the student is assigned to the center. A few centers hold joint counseling sessions for parents and students and have organized parent advisory groups. Some even go so far as to enter into a contract between the school, the student, and the parent.

In addition to parent involvement, most centers cooperate with other agencies and workers who serve young people, including juvenile court officials, probation officers and health care organizations. The services that a student might be assisted in obtaining range from getting a pair of eyeglasses, to tutorial aid, to counseling.

School-community guidance centers have several areas of objectives including: (1) helping students with assignments from their home schools or conducting an alternative curriculum; (2) counseling; (3) coordinating services with other agencies; (4) encouraging parental involvement in the school and with the student; and (5) follow-up with students once they return to the regular school.

School-community guidance centers appear to be successful because students are not dropping out of school while at the center and because most students assigned to the centers return to the regular classroom. The centers have begun compiling statistics on what happens to students after they return to their home schools. Two centers reported another sign of program success—there was a noticeable reduction in juvenile daytime crime when the centers first opened.

A report in July 1982 showed the following statistics:

## SCHOOL-COMMUNITY GUIDANCE CENTERS

TABLE 1

School District	Number of Students Served	Students Referred to Other Sources for Assistance	Number of Repeaters
Abilene	421	59	71
Deer Park	602	72	260
Goose Creek	864	200	356
Grand Prairie	101	22	1
Harlingen	250	4	34
Judson	1,060	57	355
Lamar Consolidated	586	14	208
Longview	746	9	96
McAllen*	28	2	0
San Angelo	544	12	97
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,310</b>		

\*Long-Term Centers—one semester or more.

The Governor's Criminal Justice Division cooperates with other local school districts to operate similar in-school suspension programs.

Results of a survey of Texas school districts by the Select Committee in July 1982 showed that 90 percent of the districts with an average daily attendance (ADA) of more than 5,000 operate in-school suspension centers. Less than a third of school districts with ADA of less than 1,000 have in-school suspension centers. This leads to the conclusion that the more urbanized a school district, the more likely it is to use in-school suspension centers.

The survey also indicated that the less wealth a school district has, the more likely it is to have an in-school suspension program. Of those districts with less than \$100,000 market value per average daily attendance, 60 percent had in-school suspension programs while of those districts with more than \$150,000 market value per average daily attendance, only 36 percent had in-school suspension programs.

Of those school districts that operate in-school suspension programs, most use a classroom within a school building rather than separate facilities, regardless of the ADA. Seventy-five percent use classrooms according to the survey. Eighty-five percent of the in-school suspension programs are for secondary level students, and more than 90 percent are for short-term suspensions (less than a semester). Eight percent of the school district's in-school suspension centers have an average daily attendance of 50 or more; 73 percent average less than 10 students daily.

Goals of school-community guidance centers and in-school suspension programs are to improve daily school attendance; decrease student drop-outs, suspensions and expulsions; aid students in acquiring social competence; improve academic achievement; and decrease the incidence of juvenile daytime crime.

Another attempt to resolve the growing problems of disruptiveness and violence in the classroom has been the development of a proposed Student Code of Conduct. The Code is the result of a conference sponsored by the state attorney general in 1980. It addresses school life and the rights and responsibilities of students. The State Board of Education endorsed the principle of the Code. Texas school districts are free to adjust or modify the Code to meet local needs and conditions.

**TABLE 2**  
**NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED BY GRADE LEVEL AND RACE/ETHNICITY**

Grade Level	White	Hispanic	Black	Asian or Pacific Islander	American Indian or Alaskan Native	TOTAL
5	0	2	0	0	0	2
6	79	45	44	0	0	168
7	384	257	89	0	0	730
8	510	366	165	0	1	1,042
9	771	457	328	3	1	1,560
10	601	189	172	3	0	965
11	312	92	119	0	0	523
12	226	34	60	0	0	320
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,883</b>	<b>1,442</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5,310</b>

# Gifted and Talented Programs

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Another segment of the school population with varying educational needs, beginning to receive more emphasis in districts, is the gifted and talented students. In 1979, the Legislature enacted Section 16.501 of the Texas Education Code and appropriated \$5 million for the 1979-81 biennium for educational programs for gifted and talented students. The money was awarded to school districts on a competitive basis, with each program eligible to receive \$150 per student for up to five percent of the average daily attendance of the grade levels included in the program. The state appropriation for gifted and talented programs for the 1981-83 biennium was increased to \$8 million. In the 1982-83 fiscal year, 114 gifted and talented programs involving students from 261 school districts will receive state funds.

The percentage figure used nationally to designate gifted and talented students is 5 percent of the student population. Using this criterion approximately 150,000 students in Texas could be classified as gifted and/or talented. Most of the state-funded gifted and talented programs are for elementary level students. However, more secondary programs are being instituted, particularly with special classes, advanced placement and international baccalaureate programs.

Texas funds gifted and talented programs in four areas of ability: general intellectual ability, specific subjects, creative and productive thinking, and leadership. Some school districts operate all four types of programs while others may have only one. In addition to state-supported gifted and talented programs, a number of school districts have locally funded programs. These statistics, however, are not reported to the Texas Education Agency.

Among the various types of programs in this area are pull-out programs in which students leave their regular classroom and participate in gifted and talented programs in a resource room with a specially assigned teacher; special classes designed for gifted and talented students; or group or individualized instruction within the regular classroom. In a few instances, such as in Corpus Christi ISD, single-purpose gifted and talented schools are operated.

In May 1982, the State Board of Education adopted a rule authorizing the appointment of an advisory panel that will advise the Texas Education Agency on the statewide program for the education of the gifted and talented. The 15-member panel includes three district school board members, three business and industry representatives, three parents of students participating in gifted and talented programs, and six educators with experience or interest in gifted education.

## Conclusion

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The large number of diverse districts in Texas appears to preclude a uniform state policy mandating certain types of alternative instructional arrangements. The differential in resource facilities, daily attendance and unique district characteristics would appear to make standardization of any particular instructional organization inappropriate. Similarly, there should be few or no barriers established to restrict the initiative for developing alternative instructional arrangements.

There is a reason to believe from the case study visitations that for certain types of students in certain types of environments, some form of alternative instructional arrangement may have a positive effect on student performance and behavior. When the alternative instructional arrangement is patterned after career choice training which the student has identified as a goal, a high motivational level exists and higher achievement often results. Additionally, disciplinary problems in such environments appear to be minimal. Due to these factors, districts visited have indicated students in career track instructional programs frequently score higher on standardized achievement tests than students in conventional programs. Supporting data is not included in this report as individual test scores are kept confidential as required by the law.

In alternative instructional arrangements dealing with disruptive students, the success rate of returning these students to the normal classroom environment rather than out-of-school suspension appears to be significant. Clearly, there are a number of factors affecting this success rate—the root of the problem behavior, parental involvement, support services available, and the student's attitude about himself.

Care should be taken in identifying and evaluating disruptive students since the primary goal of the school should be the normal progression of the student in a healthy environment. It is equally important that school districts not be encouraged to identify students as disruptive simply to receive extra dollars for high-cost students. It is in certain cases where support services are required in the addition to those found in the regular classroom, however, that some type of alternative instructional arrangement appears to become feasible.

Larger districts with multiple campuses and numerous classroom facilities can more easily adapt to varied and discrete alternative arrangements. However, most alternative instructional arrangements can be modified depending on resources and needs of smaller districts. This was demonstrated through case study visitations conducted by the committee. Exposure to various professions in smaller communities can be accomplished through such mechanisms as career days, guest lecturers, internships, part-time employment training, supervised field trips, etc. Where geographically feasible, school districts could consider developing alternative instructional arrangements on a cooperative basis.

It should be emphasized that traditional academic requirements for graduation—mathematics, English, science, etc.—must be the core of all alternative instructional arrangements. Students who participate in special programs do so because of additional needs, goals or desires. In some cases the student's need is associated with disruptive behavior; in other cases the student may feel he or she has identified a career choice.

It should be noted that in the Houston area, magnet schools have been beneficial in implementing a voluntary desegregation plan for the entire metropolis. Attendance at a particular school, because of its focus and purpose rather than its location, has yielded many positive benefits to students as well as to the entire district. This concept is being closely monitored and reviewed by the court and other districts as a possible solution to problems of racially imbalanced schools.

Alternative instructional programs have been used, are being used, and, hopefully, will continue to be used to address a wide variety of identified needs—desegregation, discipline problems, career choice training, special student populations such as gifted and talented, special education, etc. In their attempts to fulfill their mandate



to provide the best possible education for all students in Texas, school districts have conceptualized and implemented a wide variety of instructional designs, some of which have been highly successful. It is hoped that information concerning successful alternative instructional arrangements can be gathered and widely disseminated so that parents, educators and communities may be encouraged to explore ways of continuously upgrading their educational program.

# Recommendations

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## Program Recommendations

### Recommendation #1:

It is recommended that the Central Education Agency emphasize the importance of science, mathematics and technology education by:

- strengthening the course requirements for high school graduation;
- providing adequate funding for inservice programs for mathematics and science teachers;
- fostering business-school partnerships for pre-college math and science endeavors;
- encouraging implementation of alternative instructional arrangements and/or magnet schools which focus on mathematics, science and technology; and
- encouraging alternative staffing patterns to more effectively utilize teachers with mathematics and science expertise.

### Justification

Reports show that student achievement scores on national assessment scales in mathematics and science are unsatisfactory in meeting the goals of a changing society. Mathematics scores on Scholastic Aptitude Tests have declined steadily over an 18-year period. Research collected by the National Science Board shows that high school students today are shunning science. Yet skills in mathematics and science will be necessary to produce workers who can relate to technologically oriented tools such as computers. Military officers already are complaining that new recruits do not possess the skills that require technical or logical understanding.

Any effort to upgrade mathematics and science instruction must take into account the fact that the number of qualified teachers for mathematics and science courses has reached critically low levels. The above recommendation addresses this shortage from two perspectives. First, it provides for training to build up future cadres of prepared teachers. Second, it encourages the concentration of instructional programs whereby selectively trained teachers can be better utilized to teach a greater number of students in mathematics, science and technology.

# Recommendations

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## Program Recommendations

### Recommendation #2:

It is recommended that the Central Education Agency be encouraged to provide support for alternative schools by:

- developing guidelines for alternative instructional arrangements, giving consideration to admission requirements for students, flexible scheduling, requirements of teachers who will be assigned to the schools and descriptions of differentiated programs based on individual needs of students;
- establishing procedures for encouraging small school districts to implement cooperative programs not only in vocational and special education, but also in alternative instructional programs;
- providing for periodic reporting on results of alternative instructional arrangements in terms of state goals; and
- disseminating data about alternative school programs operating within the state.

### Justification

The history of the education of Texas children reflects an ever-present concern about the differences in students' needs, and the varied approaches which have been used to address these needs. Different students learn in different ways and different teachers teach in different ways. It is important to match teacher to learning and to develop an educational system in which parents, students and teachers can choose the type of program they believe to be in their best interest. The idea of choice in public schooling is highly consistent with the principles of a democratic society and conducive to the development of a system which moves away from a single, monolithic educational program for all students and toward a diverse system of educational alternatives.

An examination of the status of alternative instructional programs throughout the state, has yielded information reflecting a wide variety of identified needs and strategies to address these needs. Large and small districts, rich and poor districts, have found creative ways to address their own perceived needs. The above recommendation, by providing for guidelines, information and models, allows school districts to focus on their own needs, and encourages local initiative in finding solutions to their own problems.

# Recommendations

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## Program Recommendations

### Recommendation #3:

It is recommended that the Central Education Agency adopt a merit or differentiated transcript for students who graduate from accelerated programs in Texas high schools.

### Justification

At a time when the skills necessary for employment and day-to-day living are becoming increasingly complex and technologically oriented, we are seeing a decrease in the number of advanced or rigorous courses being taken for high school graduation. Only 34 percent of Texas high school graduates have completed three years of math. Only 8 percent have completed a course in calculus. A little over 30 percent have completed a course in chemistry. Less than 1.5 percent have completed an advanced level foreign language course.

A study of alternative programs in Texas reveals certain instructional administrative components that seem to be present in almost all successful programs regardless of the size of the school district. These include a clear and commonly understood primary objective, a rigorous curriculum with limited choices, greater expectations of students in areas such as homework and extra-curricular activities, and increased demands on teachers. These elements could be supported across the state by specifying a more rigorous, disciplined, demanding instructional track that would lead to a merit transcript acknowledged as exceptional throughout the state.

# Recommendations

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## Program Recommendations

### Recommendation #4:

It is recommended that the State Board of Education request the Commission on Standards for the Teaching Profession to review teacher training requirements to insure that within existing course requirements, competencies are specifically addressed dealing with classroom management, discipline, and special student needs.

### Justification

Alternative instructional arrangements have been implemented throughout the state to address an ever-widening array of identified student and school district needs. While local school districts are to be commended for developing creative solutions to perceived problems, it must be noted that alternative programs such as magnet schools and suspension centers cannot be implemented for every identified student need. Training should be provided to equip regular program staff with those competencies necessary for dealing with a varied student population.

# Case Studies

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In the course of work on this report, the Subcommittee on Alternative Instructional Arrangements and advisers visited a variety of magnet and alternative instructional programs in Houston, Dallas, Carrollton-Farmers Branch, Conroe and Katy independent school districts and received presentations about unique alternative programs operating in other parts of the state.

Descriptions of some of the programs that were visited follows:

## **Houston Independent School District**

Central Administration Office: 3830 Richmond  
Houston, Texas 77027

County District Number: 101-912 Harris County      312 square miles

Student Population Fall 1982: 175,329

Ethnic Make Up: 44.32 percent Black  
29.72 percent Mexican-American  
25.96 percent White and Other

Number of Campuses: 237 total  
168 elementary  
36 junior high  
33 senior high

Court-ordered Desegregation: Yes

Programs Visited: High School for Performing and Visual Arts  
Will Rogers Elementary Extended Day Program  
High School for the Health Professions  
High School for Engineering Professionals  
Oak Forest Vanguard/Gifted and Talented  
F.M. Black Student Referral Center

## **High School for Performing and Visual Arts**

High School for Performing and Visual Arts  
Student Capacity: 600 students  
Separate Facility  
Admission Requirements: By audition and referral

### **Uniqueness of Program**

The High School for Performing and Visual Arts offers special instruction in dance, drama, the media arts, music and visual arts. The program is housed in a facility built specifically for it and includes dance studios, acoustically engineered music rooms, and facilities for stage performances and visual arts.

## **Program Description**

The school for performing and visual arts is for students in grades 9 through 12 who are selected based on application, audition and interview. The school addresses the needs of young artists by providing instruction in regular academics and a concentrated course of study in an arts area. Students have a seven-hour course day with four hours of academics and a three-hour block devoted to their art area each day.

Teachers are certified by the state in the areas in which they teach and are encouraged to remain active in the arts.

## **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The program gives students preparation for further training and/or a basis on which to make career choices. The small student population encourages a closeness between students and staff. The interest in arts tends to motivate academic achievement. Test scores of achievement and proficiency in basic skills show the students to have some of the highest scores in the Houston ISD.

Shortcomings are the distances students must travel to get to the school and the lack of some extra-curricular activities, such as athletics. All electives offered in a conventional high school, such as industrial arts and homemaking, are not available at the school.

## **Goals**

Desired goals for the school include developing a summer program for students who do not attend the school during the regular school year, increasing the emphasis on academic achievement, and expanding understanding through cooperation with other school districts.

# **Will Rogers Elementary Extended Day Program**

## **Uniqueness of the Program**

The Will Rogers Extended Day Program offers enrichment activities for children of working parents three days a week from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. The program is for students in kindergarten through grade five.

## **Description of the Program**

Students participating in the extended day program take regular academic courses during regular school hours and select enrichment courses for the extended day program. Among enrichment courses available are spelling, drama, language arts, mathematics, literature, piano, science, art, guitar, creative writing and oral expression. Students are divided in groups of K-2 and 3-5. They change courses each nine weeks.

Enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis and there is no charge to the parents. There were 242 students enrolled in the 1981-82 extended day program out of a total of 535 students in the regular school program.

The staff includes 10 experienced "master" teachers, an hourly paid art instructor and drama instructor, and two teacher aides. Flexible scheduling allows the program to have a support staff consisting of a nurse and counselor. Teachers may work any number of days that they choose and receive add-on salary for their work.

## **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The program is intended to aid in the total development of the student. Since the students who are enrolled are primarily children of working parents, the program is viewed as a service to the community in that it pro-

vides structured, supervised time for students. Such a program fosters a tie between the community and schools. Parents must transport their children which gives school staff a regular opportunity to see and talk with parents.

Every student is exposed to a variety of programs which increases the possibility that a student will find some course in which he or she will be able to excel.

Some identified weaknesses are scheduling and teacher burnout. For example, problems may occur if parents are not diligent in picking up their children promptly at 5:30 p.m. when the day is scheduled to end. Teacher burnout can become a problem if administrators are not alert for signs that the long days are becoming a burden to teachers.

### **Goals**

The school wants to enhance the total development of students, particularly in basic skills. Teachers in the extended day program are increasing efforts to relate their enrichment programs to the regular school academics.

## **High School for the Health Professions**

### **Uniqueness of the Program**

The High School for the Health Professions is sponsored jointly by Houston ISD and the Baylor College of Medicine. The school offers an alternative to the traditional comprehensive high school for students with special interests in science and health-related professions. Established in 1972, the program was the first of its kind in the nation.

Through this program, high school students can work with advanced medical equipment in the facilities of the Texas Medical Center and interact with top medical professionals on a daily basis.

### **Description of the Program**

The High School for the Health Professions provides students a firm academic background in English, history, math and science, in addition to the health care-related studies. Students have the opportunity to put classroom theory and instruction into practical application in cooperative programs with medical and pharmaceutical laboratories and dental clinics, and through actual patient care in area health care facilities. In this manner, students can explore the various health care careers available to them without making the long-term commitment necessary at the college level.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The major strengths of the program center around the cooperative relationships which the school maintains with the Baylor College of Medicine and practicing professionals in the area. In addition to a highly qualified regular staff, college faculty members frequently present lectures to the high school classes.

The only major weakness appears to be related to the logistics involved in transporting students to a centralized location in one of the nation's most spread-out cities.

### **Goals**

School officials are committed to the goal of keeping abreast of developments in health care career fields in order to maintain the status of this program as possibly the best of its type in the nation.



## **High School for Engineering Professionals**

### **Uniqueness of the Program**

The High School for Engineering Professionals, unlike some other magnet schools in Houston ISD, operates as a “school within a school.” Therefore, students enrolled in the special program can take part in athletics, music or other electives offered by the regular school program.

Also unique to the program is the funding source. Twenty-six oil, gas, chemical, electronic and other energy-related corporations have backed the program since 1975, allowing the program to operate without federal aid.

### **Description of the Program**

The High School for Engineering Professionals is a secondary school with major emphasis on applied mathematics and science. The program is oriented toward providing superior academic opportunities for highly talented college-bound students who may wish to major in engineering in college. The students are not “locked in” to the one career choice, however. The curriculum includes components in communication skills and the humanities and provides an excellent preparation for law, medicine, business or any of the sciences.

Corporate contributions have allowed the school to acquire outstanding laboratory facilities and a sophisticated computer system for student instruction.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

A major strength of the program emanates from the support given the program by the business community. Extensive field trip opportunities and the availability of speakers to visit and lecture classes are examples of ways in which the businessmen and women participate in the program.

As with most of the magnet programs in Houston, the major weakness is the problem of transportation to a centralized campus in an urban environment.

### **Goals**

Program officials indicate a desire to continue to foster their relationship with the business community in order to maintain the high caliber of the current instructional program.

## **Oak Forest Vanguard/Gifted and Talented**

### **Uniqueness of Program**

The vanguard gifted and talented program is an all-day, self-contained basic skills and enrichment program for students in grades kindergarten through five. It is housed in one wing of the Oak Forest Elementary School.

### **Program Description**

Vanguard gifted and talented students are identified by referrals, achievement test results and interviews. Selection is based on ability, creativity and interview performance. The 150 students are in classes of 25 each, grouped according to chronological age. The program has a full-time teacher for each class. There is also a full-time music teacher and a full-time physical education teacher, a part-time bilingual and Spanish teacher and a counselor.

The program has extensive fine arts enrichment and off-campus activities. Extra funds are available for the school with which to purchase audio-visual equipment. Students are taught to use computers, video-taping equipment and cameras.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

One of the disadvantages is the amount of travel time involved for students who attend the school. Students may have to leave home as early as 6 a.m. and not return until after 4 p.m.

A program strength is that students have opportunities to do extensive research projects on subjects which they select.

In an effort to increase teacher effectiveness, teachers participate in 80 hours of specialized training offered by the school district.

### **Goals**

The feasibility of offering a gifted and talented class for pre-kindergarten students is being studied. In addition, the program would like to expand at each grade level as needs require such expansion.

## **F.M. Black Student Referral Center**

### **Uniqueness of Program**

The F.M. Black Student Referral Center serves as an alternative to out-of-school suspension for students in grades 6 through 12.

### **Description of Program**

F.M. Black Student Referral Center opened in 1974. It is a joint project of the Houston Independent School District and Community Youth Services, the delinquency prevention component of the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department. The project is funded entirely by the Houston ISD. Students are referred to the center by school principals, assistant principals and teachers in lieu of suspension for tardiness, truancy, fighting, profanity, disrespect, defying authority, disruptive behavior, drinking or smoking. Up to 18 students a day can be accommodated at the center. The length of assignment ranges from a minimum of three days to a maximum of five weeks.

Students assigned to the center are isolated from the other student population and are under the direct supervision of the classroom teacher at all times. Regular teachers for the students are notified to send classroom assignments for the student. These assignments must be completed before the student leaves the center. The center staff consists of one teacher and one counselor, and one worker from the Community Youth Services who assists if a foster home or shelter assignment is necessary. The worker from the Community Youth Services also serves as a bridge between the school and the child welfare agencies. The teacher at the center must have a master's degree and the counselor must have had previous experience working with all ethnic groups.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

One of the strengths of the program is having a worker from Community Youth Services on staff. The worker has training in recognizing certain problems and can make referrals to appropriate agencies. Counselors are available to work with students and parents.

One of the weaknesses of the program is that there often is a lag between the time the student arrives at the center and when the home teacher sends class work. A student may spend an entire day without having any assigned work. Since a student cannot be dismissed from the center until school work is completed, the initial assignment period may have to be extended.

F.M. Black Student Referral Center is located at the F.M. Black School and receives students from several schools located in the areas. One of the strong disciplinary features is that students from other schools are in an unfamiliar setting.

### **Goals**

The referral center is striving to increase parent involvement so that parents are more aware of the problems students may have and thus allow for more parental assistance in solving those problems.

### **Dallas Independent School District**

Central Administration Office: 3700 Ross Avenue  
Dallas, Texas 75204

County District Number: 057-905 Dallas County      351 square miles

Student Population Fall 1982: 134,074

Ethnic Make Up: 49.89 percent Black  
20.75 percent Mexican-American  
29.36 percent White and Other

Number of Campuses: 198 total  
138 elementary  
24 junior high  
36 senior high

Court-ordered Desegregation: Yes

Programs Visited: Metro-West Alternative School  
The Business and Management Center

### **Metro-West Alternative School**

#### **Uniqueness of Program**

The Metropolitan Alternative School is designed to meet the individual needs of students between the ages of 15 and 21 in grades 9 through 12 who have dropped out of school or those who appear likely to drop out. The program gives students the opportunity to earn credits for graduation from high school.

## **Program Description**

Dallas Independent School District has five Metropolitan Alternative School campuses with a combined student capacity of 2,200. Students are referred to the school by home school principals or by third-party assignments from the Dallas ISD Student Affairs Office.

Staff at Metro-West consists of an assistant principal, a secretary, counselor, counselor's clerk, 18 teachers, two teacher aides, and a paraprofessional campus liaison.

Metropolitan Alternative Schools draw gifted and talented students as well as low achievers. Each student has a contract listing the times he or she will attend the school and expected goals. There are no formal classes, no homework and no grading for attendance or tardiness. The school furnishes all textbooks and supplies. There are no fees. All school work is done under the supervision of a teacher at the school, which is open from 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m. Instruction is available in all courses which are required for high school graduation. Some elective courses are offered. Although students do their work at the Metropolitan Alternative School, their diplomas are awarded from their home schools. About 140 to 150 students each year complete course requirements for graduation at Metropolitan Alternative School.

## **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The school aims to meet the needs of students with individualized instruction and flexible scheduling. In addition, the students have easy access to counselors.

The schools have an open-room concept much like a library. Students have the freedom to move about in an atmosphere conducive to learning. The program design stresses individual achievement, thus there is no competition between the 15 year old who is working at the 11th grade level and the 18 year old who is working at a lower grade level. The program costs about \$12 a day per student, about the same as at a regular school. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1 to 15, compared with 1 to 27 in many conventional schools.

The school has no extra-curricular activities such as drama, athletics or band.

## **Goals**

In addition to reducing the number of individuals who do not have high school diplomas or the equivalent, the school strives to improve individual academic skills and study habits and to help students develop self-respect and a feeling of personal worth.

# **The Business and Management Center**

## **Uniqueness of Program**

At the Business and Management Center, business and education work together to "design and mold" an appropriately educated student prepared to enter the business world. The program offers instruction and on-the-job experiences that enable students to go to work immediately upon graduation from high school or to continue training and education. Because the school is business oriented, students must adhere to a business-like dress code.

## **Program Description**

The Business and Management Center offers instruction to students who are interested in a career in business. Areas of training are offered in office careers, marketing and management. Additionally, a variety of related and enrichment classes are offered including accounting, business law, computer programming, etc. Students may attend the school all day, taking regular academic courses and a three-hour block of business-related courses each day, or they may attend part time and return to their home school for academic courses.

## **Strengths and Weaknesses**

A business advisory council made up of local business leaders works with the program, supplying guidance and support to make the program as up-to-date as possible.

The school has a variety of business equipment so that students are familiar with the machines when they work internships or begin regular employment. The school's downtown location provides easy access for businessmen and women who come to the campus as resource persons and for students going to jobs.

One weakness might be that some of the extra-curricular activities such as athletics and band, which are offered at regular high schools, are not available at the Business and Management Center. However, there is a variety of business-related activities such as Distributive Education Clubs of America and the Office Education Association and other opportunities to participate in area, state and national business club activities and events.

## **Goals**

One goal is to encourage more enrollment of white and Mexican-American students.

### **Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District**

Central Administration Office: Box 186  
Carrollton, Texas 75006

County District Number: 057-903 Dallas County      52 square miles

Student Population Fall 1982: 13,504

Ethnic Make Up:    1.74 percent Black  
                          9.01 percent Mexican-American  
                          89.25 percent White and Other

Number of Campuses: 18 total  
                              13 elementary  
                              3 junior high  
                              2 senior high

Court-ordered Desegregation: No

Programs Visited: Valley View Reassignment School  
                          Academic Creative Program for Gifted and Talented Students  
                          Valley View Learning Center

## **Valley View Reassignment School**

### **Uniqueness of Program**

The Reassignment School is specifically designed to address the needs of the student with disciplinary/behavioral problems. The program's goal is to provide students the means to correct their behavioral patterns.

### **Description of the Program**

The Reassignment School was established in 1977. It is staffed by a full-time counselor/teacher and an aide, and handles an average of 17 students a day, spanning grades 7 through 12. Students are moved through different levels of expectations as they progress behaviorally. Students earn "points" at the various levels and are eventually released back to their home school.

Although the primary emphasis is on improving behavior, daily assignments are given to students from their home teachers. The instructional budget for the school comes from the various home schools.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The success of the program is evident in 1981-82 school year data. For example, only two students out of 6,000 in the district were suspended—the rest were kept working in the educational process. The repetition rate is only 20 percent. The major strength of the program appears to be related to its structure which demands that students adhere to very specific rules of behavior.

One of the Reassignment School's problems crops up when assignments do not arrive for the students. Since the whole purpose of the school relies on the tightly structured environment, the student with nothing to do poses a threat to the desired routine. There are additional logistical problems which hamper the efficiency of the program, including the great number of people who are involved in assigning the student to the Reassignment School, transporting the student to the school, coordinating assignment schedules, etc.

### **Goals**

The district is considering dividing the Reassignment School into two levels: 7th and 8th graders in one and 9th through 12th graders in another. It is felt that it would be more beneficial to keep the younger students separate from the high school students.

## **Academic Creative Education Program For Gifted and Talented Students**

### **Academic Creative Education Program for Gifted and Talented Students**

**Student Capacity:** Eight percent of the school district's total enrollment is enrolled in the program (330 in 1982-83). All of the district's students are tested annually and are selected for enrollment based on IQ test scores, committee reviews and demonstrated outstanding achievement. Special circumstances, such as language and cultural disabilities, physical handicaps and diagnosed learning disabilities, may be considered. The program operates on 13 elementary school campuses and at three junior high campuses.

## **Uniqueness of the Program**

The Academic Creative Education program (ACE) in Carrollton-Farmers Branch is utilizing the "best of both worlds" as far as its teachers are concerned. It combines the expertise of the gifted and talented specialist with the expertise of the regular classroom teacher, thus giving the children a well-rounded education as well as giving all teachers a chance to become involved with gifted students. The ACE program involves extensive training for teachers which is done at the district's expense. The program enjoys wide acceptance and assistance from area principals, which eases the implementation of the program throughout the district.

## **Description of the Program**

The ACE program began in 1978 with one class of 30 and expanded to 318 students on 15 campuses by the 1981-82 school year. The district originally had a "pull-out" program where all children identified as gifted and talented were removed from their regular classroom and transported to a centralized school where they were taught for an hour and a half. The number of students served by the program was necessarily small, and not much could be accomplished in the short time frame each day.

In 1982-83, the district began the team-cluster approach. This will serve 4th and 5th graders and will involve a gifted and talented specialist going to teach the four elementary schools in the district.

The regular classroom teachers are being trained by the district in recognizing and working with gifted and talented students. The gifted and talented teachers are required to have six hours of graduate course work in the gifted and talented area (all teachers of gifted and talented students at Carrollton-Farmers Branch, however, have 18 or more hours). The teachers are responsible for 40 students, while regular classroom teachers have up to eight gifted students in their classes.

The major areas of emphasis of the program are: critical and creative thinking, problem solving, research and self actualization. Students are encouraged to reach well-defined goals, including developing a positive self-esteem, developing a commitment to creative production, and developing a commitment to the quest for knowledge.

ACE currently receives \$37,000 in state funds and \$100,000 in local funds, the total of which covers salaries, travel, materials, etc.

## **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The advantages of the program are many. The ACE program impacts more than the gifted and talented students. The training and level of involvement of the regular classroom teacher makes them feel more comfortable with the students and better equipped to handle the special problems of the gifted child. In addition, the enthusiasm of the regular teacher is greatly enhanced.

Training is the program's main problem. It is both time-consuming and expensive, and an on-going function as teachers come and go through the system. Identification of gifted and talented students districtwide involves a great deal of planning and coordination, as well as time. Another problem is the fact that the team approach means a relatively non-visible program. Unless parents and other visitors know what to look for, they cannot immediately see the program at work. For those parents who tend to see the program as a kind of status symbol, this can be a real problem.

The team approach used in the program appears to be better for the children because they can remain in their own school. In this manner, the entire district at the elementary level is served. The other children in the classroom also benefit: thinking is emphasized and hidden talents of all the children are often exposed. In general, the program has received positive responses from parents and fewer negative comments than the earlier pull-out program with its limited attendance and transportation problems.

### **Goals**

The district is exploring ways to better address the needs of gifted and talented students in high school. The screening method is also being revised to include more minorities.

## **Valley View Learning Center**

### **Uniqueness of Program**

Participating students enroll in the learning center on a volunteer basis. Because the student wants to attend and has to be accepted, greater motivation for success in the program is provided and few disciplinary problems occur.

### **Description of the Program**

The Center opened in 1976 with 100 students. The program is designed for the dropout who chooses to return and finish his or her education. Students range in age from 15 to 21. Students specify their own curriculum, choosing areas of interest in which they recognize a need for assistance. The campus is open and students take a minimum of four classes daily.

The teachers also serve as faculty advisers, assisting the students with personal problems upon request. There are currently four academic teachers, two vocational teachers, an aide, a counselor and one administrator. Currently, the student/teacher ratio is 25 to 1 with the total budget for the program amounting to about \$10,000 a year.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The major strengths of Valley View's approach to alternative instruction concern the flexibility of the program which allows students to develop a curriculum which will be of most benefit to them, modeling it on an adult performance basis.

The learning center administrator and teachers acknowledge that there are several weak areas in the program. The school operates on a work/study basis which is good for the teaching load but causes problems when younger students are enrolled in the program since they cannot legally be employed during school hours. Another problem lies in the fact that the school has only one English teacher and it is believed to be best if students who take more than one year of English be able to have different teachers each year. The same is true in some other areas of the curriculum. The center would also like to add to its present curriculum.

Attendance, which was a major discipline problem at the beginning of the program, has risen from 54 percent in the first year to 80 percent in 1981-82. The dropout rate went down from 22 percent to 18 percent, and parental involvement has increased dramatically. The students want to be in the program so, for the most part, teachers are not faced with the problems of the schools where students are sent for disciplinary action.



## **Goals**

The learning center plans to expand its program, adding reading, an additional science course, and homemaking units to the curriculum. It is hoped that the program will double in five years although this will mean that the center will have to add portable buildings to its campus. The school will actively recruit both teachers and dropouts as it expands. Administrators and teachers will be working together to determine more specifically the long-range goals involved.

## **Katy Independent School District**

Central Administration Office: Box 159  
Katy, Texas 77449

County District Number: 101-914 Harris County      181 square miles

Student Population Fall 1982: 10,722

Ethnic Make Up:    3      percent Black  
                         7.03 percent Mexican-American  
                         89.97 percent White and Other

Number of Campuses: 15 total  
                             9 elementary  
                             3 junior high  
                             3 senior high

Court-ordered Desegregation: Yes

Programs Visited: Katy Outdoor Learning Center  
                         Opportunity Awareness Center

## **Katy Outdoor Learning Center**

### **Uniqueness of Program**

The Outdoor Learning Center is unique among outdoor programs for several reasons: it serves all grades instead of just one or a few; it is not purely recreational; and it does not function in the summer camp structure that other outdoor programs do. The program is intended to be a hands-on lesson in ecology and environmental awareness.

### **Description of the Program**

The Outdoor Learning Center is a program of outdoor education, not simply recreation. The site covers 34 acres with over a mile of nature trails, a lake, a half-acre garden site, and some small farm animals. The program began operation in the 1981-82 school year serving grades K-12. Curriculum guides have been developed for both the elementary and secondary levels.

Classroom teachers make reservations to use the center. A bus transports the children to the center and returns them to their school. Nearly 4700 students visited the center last year. There is a full-time director working at the center and another teacher assists on a part-time basis. Operating expenses, excluding salaries, totaled about \$25,000 during the center's first year of operation.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The strength of the program lies in its uniqueness. The outdoor learning experience truly benefits children who otherwise might never get the opportunity to experience a "natural" environment. The facility itself, with its combination of features, has proven to be a remarkably effective learning tool, and is close enough to all schools to require only minimal transportation.

### **Goals**

The district plans to add features to the center, including a barn with additional small animals, a blacksmith shop, a caretaker's cottage, and a log cabin-type museum which will be adjacent to the caretaker's cottage. A curriculum is being developed for elective physical education classes which might include canoeing, backpacking, fishing and other outdoor activities.

## **Opportunity Awareness Center**

### **Opportunity Awareness Center**

Student Capacity: 150, with average daily enrollment of 25 to 52 in the long-term program in which the minimum stay is six weeks. The short-term program has a capacity of 65 students. Students are assigned for three to five days, and there is an average daily attendance of 17 students. The center is a separate facility.

### **Uniqueness of Program**

The Opportunity Awareness Center personnel believe their program is unique because of the higher degree of visibility between teachers and the students. The fact that students are closely and constantly supervised has given the center a high rate of success.

### **Description of the Program**

The alternative school program began in 1975 with the development of an in-school suspension option. The Opportunity Awareness Center became operational in 1978, concentrating on modifying disruptive behavior rather than simply isolating it.

The program serves high school students only. In the short-term program, the students are isolated from their home campus, rigorously supervised, and continue their classroom work through assignments from their regular teachers.

The largest concentration of students is in the long-term part of the program. Students continue their classes at the center, generally staying at least a full semester, with disciplinary control and intensive counseling.

The Opportunity Awareness Center has five certified teachers, including math, science, social studies and vocational education teachers, with the fifth teacher being certified in both English and special education. Counseling is the responsibility of each staff member, and significant amounts of class time are spent in individual and group counseling.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The program's strengths include its very competent and caring staff and the excellent facilities constructed specifically for the center. The building is designed in such a manner that supervision of students is facilitated.

The limited curriculum at the Opportunity Awareness Center appears to be its major weakness at this point. A student may come to the center having been in art, for example, in his home school, and the center does not offer art.

### **Goals**

The Opportunity Awareness Center's long-range plans center primarily on expanding its curriculum, particularly through adding to the vocational offerings. The center will also add teachers as the student enrollment increases.

### **Conroe Independent School District**

Central Administration Office: 702 North Thompson  
Conroe, Texas 77301

County District Number: 170-902 Montgomery County      334 square miles

Student Population Fall 1982: 18,305

Ethnic Make Up:    4.9 percent Black  
                          3.52 percent Mexican-American  
                          91.58 percent White and Other

Number of Campuses: 27 total  
                              14 elementary  
                              8 junior high  
                              5 senior high

Court-ordered Desegregation: No

Programs Visited: Conroe Reassignment School

### **Conroe Reassignment School**

#### **Uniqueness of Program**

The Reassignment School's record of success stems from the fact that it creates a strictly structured environment that emphasizes to the student school would be far more enjoyable on the home campus. Rules are strictly adhered to and the student is made very much aware of the privileges and freedoms lost by being away from the regular classroom.

## **Description of the Program**

The Reassignment School, which was started in 1969, serves grades 7 through 12. The district actually maintains two campuses—North County and South County—each serving one high school and two junior high schools. Student population varies, ranging from 55 to 70 students. Each campus is staffed by a certified counselor and a person who is certified for working with students with learning disabilities.

Students attending have been identified as having discipline and/or drug/alcohol abuse problems. Students attend the school on a temporary basis, usually from three days to two weeks. Students must follow strict rules regarding talking to staff or other students, and are expected to work continually on classroom assignments. Privileges are granted after the student has proven a willingness to follow rules and behave in an orderly manner.

The Reassignment School maintains close ties with the home school, ensuring that each student is keeping up with current classroom assignments. Additional costs of the program are regarded as minimal for the district.

## **Strengths and Weaknesses**

One of the program's main advantages is that students are kept up-to-date in their classroom. However, at times students finished their work early and must be given something to do outside their regular classroom—a situation which might be remedied by closer communication with the home teacher.

The Reassignment School cannot be regarded as a “vacation” from school; neither is the student behind the rest of the class when returning to the home school. Therefore, the student is less tempted to cause trouble out of boredom or frustration. Teachers are encouraged to visit the reassignment campus to discuss classroom with students and staff.

Repeat offenders constitute a remarkably low level of 10 percent of the school's student population. A major asset is that students do not like having to attend the reassignment school because of its very structured environment.

The program's primary weakness may lie in its communications problems with the home school. The staff at the reassignment school believes that both the principal and classroom teachers need to be kept informed on the student's progress in order to facilitate the re-entry into the home school.

## **Goals**

The district is working on an alternative arrangement for those students identified as Special Education students. These students now are placed in the Reassignment School for discipline purposes, but it is believed that separating them from the other discipline cases would be more beneficial for them. The district also plans to implement some policy changes in its attendance requirements, which will make it even less attractive to attend the Reassignment School. In this way, the district hopes to reduce attendance at the reassignment campus by 25 percent.

## **Mesquite Independent School District**

Central Administration Office: 405 E. Davis  
Mesquite, Texas 75149

County District Number: 057-914 Dallas County      59 square miles

Student Population Fall 1982: 19,304

Ethnic Make Up:     .81 percent Black  
                      5.97 percent Mexican-American  
                      93.22 percent White and Other

Number of Campuses: 27 total  
                          20 elementary  
                          4 junior high  
                          3 senior high

Court-ordered Desegregation: No

Programs Visited: QUEST Gifted and Talented Program

## **QUEST Gifted and Talented Program**

### **Uniqueness of Program**

The QUEST gifted and talented program is a state supported, “pull-out” program for students in grades three through six.

### **Description of the Program**

Sixty students from each grade are selected to participate in the program based on performance on achievement tests. All students in the district are tested each year. Currently, there are 262 students in the program.

Students attend the program one day a week from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Through a varied curriculum, the program stresses different types of teaching strategies, promotion of creative thinking and logical thinking skills.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The program has four teachers and one full-time aide. Teachers are required to have 12 hours of studies in gifted and talented education above the master’s degree level. Teachers are assigned to a specific grade level of students.

A strength of the program is that there are more audio-visual supplies, textbooks, computers and software, and scientific equipment for the students to use than is ordinarily found in a regular school program.

The primary weakness of the program relates to the small number of students that can be served because of the limited funds available.

### **Goals**

Plans are being considered for expanding the program into the middle schools.